

Minutes

WJFF Board of Trustees

March 22, 2017

Callicoon Town Hall

Trustees Present: T. Peterson, K. Hilton, M. Springhetti, K. Geary, K. Hulit, J. Bachman, B. Demarest, P. Pomeroy, K. Gref (arrived 6:45, left 8:58). By Telephone: J. Nordstrom (left 10:15), T. Bruno (6:54), T. Farroni-Butler (6:55), A. Larsen (6:57, left 10:15)

Trustees Absent: J. Lomax

The meeting was called to order by Pat Pomeroy at 6:39

Minutes

Motion: Approve minutes of the February meeting. (Hulit/Springhetti). All in favor except J. Bachman (abstained)

Revisions to Agenda

Add Executive Session for discussion of Personnel / Real Estate

Public Comment

Members of the public spoke about:

- Keeping the station in Jeffersonville
- Purchasing land for construction of a tower
- Meeting with Jeffersonville Property landowners
- Plans for discussing station location with supporters

CAB Report

None

Interim Manager's Report

Andrea Eddings gave an overview of her report (attached).

Treasurer's Report

Updated quick books reports were distributed in advance of the meeting (attached). Ken noted a problem with the Net Asset amount that he will look in to and report back to the board.

Ken has discussed endowment management with the Community Foundation of Orange and Sullivan and will invite their management to meet with the Finance Committee and any interested WJFF board. He will contact NYCON about model gift policies.

Executive Committee

No report

Personnel Committee

The committee is working on the process for the GM hire. The application period closed.

Motion: Extend the application deadline to April 15 to allow advertising and outreach with a consistent end date to NFCB and all venues where it has been advertised thus far and while continuing interviews as planned. (Larsen/Gref)

In favor: Gref, Larsen

Opposed: Farroni-Butler, Bachman, Nordstrom, Bruno, Peterson, Hilton, Springhetti, Geary, Hulit, Demarest, Pomeroy

Motion: A hiring committee will be formed to conduct interviews and recommend finalist candidates to the Board. The committee will be composed of trustees J. Lomax, T. Farroni-Butler, and M. Springhetti. John Bachman will contact station volunteers not serving on the Board and also the CAB to solicit additional members of the committee. If more volunteers step forward than places on the committee, lots will be drawn. (Bachman/Hulit)

In favor: All

The timeframe for interviews is 4/3 to 4/14.

Audit Committee

No report

Nominating and Governance Committee

Tim briefed the Board on the timeline and outreach for Board candidates. The deadline for applications is May 12.

Development and Community Outreach Committee

No report

Facilities

Martin is scheduling a clean-up day.

Thane reported on items needed for Honesdale: telephone interview capability, resolution of a buzz on the board, an additional turntable, a way to hear the signal going out.

Old Business

Barbara reported an inquiry from Jorge Kleve regarding our interest in selling the translator. We are not interested in selling at this time.

Kit presented a report from the Joint Property workgroup (attached). Anne objected that the group had overstepped its mission by drawing conclusions rather than only gathering facts.

Motion: Hear report of the Joint Property Workgroup. (Hulit/Demarest)

In favor: T. Peterson, K. Hilton, M. Springhetti, K. Geary, K. Hulit, B. Demarest, P. Pomeroy, J. Nordstrom, T. Bruno, T. Farroni-Butler

Opposed: J. Bachman

Abstaining: A. Larsen (Conflict of interest)

Motion: *The Board authorizes the listing of the Green House for sale. The Board of Trustees authorizes the facilities committee to undertake and/or contract for the following: clear out the building, refinish the floors, paint, make minor repairs and clean-up of the yard of Green House at a cost of no more than \$2,000.*

(Hulit/Geary)

In favor: K. Hilton, M. Springhetti, K. Geary, K. Hulit, B. Demarest, P. Pomeroy, J. Nordstrom, T. Bruno,

Opposed: J. Bachman, T. Peterson, T. Farroni-Butler

Abstaining: A. Larsen (Conflict of interest)

Public Comment

Members of the public spoke about:

- Waiting to sell the Green House
- Building a broadcast tower
- Evaluating costs for construction/renovation at both properties
- Keeping volunteers and listeners informed
- Recirculating the Volunteer Manual
- Possible loss of CPB funding / communications strategy with public.

Executive Session

10:20 - Motion: Go in to executive session for purposes of discussing applications for General Manager. (Demarest/Hulit) 10:37 - Motion to come out of executive session. (Farroni-Butler/Bachman)

Motion: Have Hiring Committee move forward to conduct interviews with selected candidates and instruct Pat Pomeroy to write a "Thank you for your interest" letter to the remainder. (Hilton/Hulit)

In favor: T. Peterson, K. Hilton, M. Springhetti, K. Geary, K. Hulit, J. Bachman, B. Demarest, P. Pomeroy, T. Bruno, T. Farroni-Butler

Opposed: None

10:37 - Motion: Go in to executive session for purposes of discussing real estate.
(Bachman/Peterson) 11:03 - Motion to come out of executive session. (Hulit/Geary)

Motion: The Board of Trustees authorize the hiring of a design professional to prepare sufficiently detailed plans to provide a cost estimate for renovating the market building on the Liberty property to accommodate the offices, production and broadcast facilities of Radio Catskill in accordance with the approved strategic plan and including a solar installation and improved insulation, that a design professional also be authorized to immediately file an application with the Liberty Planning Board for a change of use permit.

In favor: T. Peterson, K. Hilton, M. Springhetti, K. Geary, K. Hulit, J. Bachman, B. Demarest, P. Pomeroy, T. Bruno, T. Farroni-Butler

Opposed: None

Motion to Adjourn – 11:03 (Demarest)

Hi everybody. I'm Kevin McDaniel.

I am here tonight to express my opinions regarding the moving of the station.

I live in Hurleyville. I'm about ten minutes from Liberty, much closer than the almost half-hour it takes me to drive to Jeffersonville. It would be far more convenient for me to volunteer in Liberty than in Jeff. Let me say for the record that if the station had started out in Liberty, I would have embraced it as I do with our station here in Jeff. *But it didn't*. Our organization has its own history and pedigree rooted deeply in its home in Jeffersonville. The following are my reasons why I would willingly travel three times the distance to volunteer my time in Jeff:

Physically speaking, the most obvious reason is that we have incorporated into our identity that we are hydro powered. It has been forever and always both our credo and identity. It is our logo, our brand. Its on our bumper stickers and our stationary. The fact that we have the distinction of being the **only** radio station in the entire country, perhaps on the entire globe that is powered by water *is not just a catchy phrase that nearly every announcer mentions: WJFF – "Powered by water", "the best little station by a dam site", "hydro powered WJFF"*.

It is a statement. A statement of sustainable environmental responsibility, a statement of independence from the fossil fuel industry, and, if it makes any difference to those who wish to move the station, it is a statement of our absolute uniqueness among the over 900 hundred other public radio stations in our country. They all have volunteer members. They all feature NPR programming as well as their own original programs. But only WE can boast among other things that make us special above all others is that we are *hydro powered*.

If the station is moved, that will obviously not be a claim we will no longer be able to make.

And while there are some who feel that our uniqueness does not hinder on whether or not we run our station with hydro electric energy, to these people I say that you're missing an important element of exactly why we are so special among all the other public stations nationally. But it goes a little deeper than that.

I do a once-a-month live show featuring original singer-songwriters. Invariably, nearly every one of my guests comments on the uncommon beauty and special uniqueness of our little station. The beauty and love and integrity and imagination and actual life itself of our station is rooted in the quaintness and realness of being surrounded by nature; the sound of the farm animals in the background, the roar of the dam after a good rain, the mere simplicity and unpretentiousness of both the surroundings and the folks who began the station that are still with us...I know Maris Hearn and others who have left us on this earthly place would not stand for talk of of ripping the soul out of the station. For that's exactly what your propose to do when you talk of taking her someplace else. Like my native sisters and brothers who were forcibly removed from their ancestral lands where they have had a connection with the earth for hundreds or thousands of years, many died or became destitute, insane an aimless. *Their connection with the place of their birth was so strong, they basically ceased to exist.*

One of the main reasons I hear why people want to move the station is lack of parking. Most of the time there are at most, three or four cars parked in the lot, and usually perhaps only two. When I do my show on Saturday, I'm the only monkey in the circus, besides my guest(s). On special occasions, I agree there can be some overflow, which seems to be taken up just fine with parking at the green house if needed.

Another is that we will have more visibility in Liberty. To that I say, better visibility to what end? Whom are we looking to attract? Why would they be more inclined to come to the station or tune in? Is the idea that we might attract more donors? I think there is a sort of wistful hopefulness that "if you build it, they will come". I don't see it. I also think that visibility does not translate into popularity or participation. Just because one sees a billboard does not mean that they'll buy the product.

And there are people who just don't share my sense of aesthetics and just don't like the present structure and would like the station to be housed in something "less quaint". They point out that there are many things we need to do to upgrade our operation. I agree with the need to upgrade. This is why we

should sell at least part of the Liberty property to fund this project. I really like the plans that Fred Pecora presented that both expand parking and create more studio area *and* a performance space that would allow us to generate revenue. We could upgrade equipment, *and* have a really first class studio, geared up for the 21st century!

I've heard a board member express a desire for the Grefs and Malcolm and Anne to sell the property to the station. I am at a loss as to why this has become an issue. I consider this a false flag operation. All of the above named have, since the inception of the station, not only been 1000% behind the project they helped to create, but are the reason we are still here. Leasing the property to us for \$1 a year, making untold and vital repairs to the dam and the turbines for 26 years (with no other plans to the contrary that I've heard of) sounds like a pretty good deal. Do some folks think that for some vindictive reason that they would pull the rug out from under us (and themselves, and the community), thereby signing a death warrant for the brainchild they've raised since infancy?

And finally, I would like to point out that moving our whole operation to Liberty, including needed upgrades just to make it habitable (a heating system, new roof, electrical upgrades, etc), plus the cost of removing all the equipment from Jeff, retrofitting the Liberty structure to meet our needs (construction/demo) and moving all the guts of the studio into the building would probably cost more than what it would cost to make needed upgrades to our home here. And where is that money coming from? We're already \$22,000 in the hole for taxes on the building.

Regardless of what we decide to do with the Liberty property, what it should NOT be used for is an excuse for a de facto home for WJFF. That property does not have the soul, the history, the context of meaning of what JFF is, and I will state here for the record that if a decision to move the station occurs, I don't know that I will want to continue being a part of something so sterile compared to our home. I'm trying to make it perfectly clear that this a very divisive and contentious issue, which I don't think the board and management comprehend in its magnitude. I know a few other programmers I've spoken with who share the same sentiments.. And these are just the few that I've spoken with.. Because the station and management have tried to keep a low profile on the subject of moving, it has not polled the pulse of the organization, we volunteers, especially the on-air folks, how we would feel about moving. Which honestly, makes us feel pretty unappreciated or inconsequential. But that's a whole 'nother kettle of fish...

To those who remain unconvinced or unmoved by my passions and still want to move, I have a suggestion: Don't stand on the shoulders of great accomplishments and tear down a project that I think you have little empathy for or understanding of. Start your own station in Liberty, if you wish. Go through the hoops and turmoil that the creation of this station entailed for yourselves and see if it's worth it. I doubt that any of us in this room have the time, energy or the spirit to accomplish this. I know I don't. And I know I don't have to, because it's already here. The hard work has already been done for us.

Let us not miss out on the opportunity of a lifetime. We have been given a fantastic gift in the way of the property. We can do a lot of great things with it to further our mission, such as a live venue for music and other arts, community meetings and perhaps sales merchandise. Or we can sell all or part of it and put the money towards a massively needed blood transfusion here at home in Jeffersonville towards renovation. And although I'm not crazy about the notion of being a landlord, has anyone considered that we could make about half of what we take in a pledge drive annually if we were to rent it?

-Kevin